



Ameritech Classroom Fall 2000

Research Center for Educational Technology Seeks To Identify Inquiry Based Learning in the Ameritech Classroom

RCET researchers have identified three areas of focus for the unique learning and research center, The Ameritech Classroom. All 2000-2001 incoming teachers were trained by the director, **Gay Fawcett**, in the skills of designing and implementing **inquiry-based lessons** during a one week August workshop. As each of the cohort teachers prepared for their six weeks in the Ameritech Classroom, they called upon this body of knowledge to plan for their experience. A second emphasis is taking a look at how **preservice teachers make decisions about effective uses of technology for higher order thinking**. Finally **alternative assessments** to measure student learning when technology is used for higher order thinking, are being investigated. The December Cohort meeting was an opportunity for future Ameritech Classroom teachers to look at the possibility of utilizing electronic portfolios. Thanks to a very informative presentation by **Maria Mastromatteo** of Channels 45/49, the teachers have had an excellent introduction into the process and products involved with construction of these portfolios. We begin the new year with **Emily Bartlett**, from Shalersville Elementary School of the Crestwood School District, and **Julie Foley** from Davey Elementary of the Kent School District. Emily's students will investigate risk-taking. Students will develop knowledge relating to risk factors in their daily lives. Julie's class will focus on a unit which addresses various forms of conflict, its sources and its influences. Both units will incorporate an interdisciplinary approach. These two innovative teachers will begin their six weeks on February 5, 2001.



Kids Answering Their Own Questions!

Kent State University

January 2001

Special points of interest:

- ☺ RCET identifies focus of classroom research
- ☺ December Cohort meeting focused on Electronic Portfolios
- ☺ Incoming Cohorts begin in early February
- ☺ Staff celebrates the work of the Stow and Norton Schools

Stow and Norton Complete Ameritech Classroom Commitment with Exemplary Units

As the Stow Public Schools complete their extended commitment to the Ameritech Classroom Project, the staff would like to highlight the wonderful work their teachers and students exhibited during the fall semester of 2000. Early September found **Karen McClain** and **Todd Poole** joining forces to educate their students on native Americans. Their unit utilized the online resources to plan and build Indian dwellings. They received soil from various US states and used that soil to grow seeds as the Indians did as they moved westward. The idea was to demonstrate that growing their crops, as their society was moved further and further west, would change dramatically with climate and soil differences. The main focus of this unit was on the variety of changes the Indians had to face. Field trips to Towner's Woods, KSU planetarium and the KSU greenhouse enriched the unit. Students wrote, produced and filmed original Indian legends involving constellations.



Stow students plant seeds in soil from around the country.

Stow Students Visit Wetlands, Fields and Forests

Sharon Carr's fourth grade students from Highland Elementary were asked if deer, hawk and beaver can live in the same place as humans? The unit was jump-started with a trip to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park where students visited a beaver dam, a field community and a forested area. They prepared little notebooks with sketches and notes to help them remember what they had observed. Students also took photographs which were utilized in lessons. Upon arrival at the Ameritech classroom, they began to put together information on these various habitats along with the flora and fauna that are native for that area. A subsequent trip

to the Kent Bog and a presentation from an educator from the EPA helped the students further explore the interrelationships between the life and the environment in which they live. Students were asked to focus on the impact the construction of a home would have on the ecosystem. They also pondered the effect of various pollutants on these delicate systems. Students culminated their experience at the Ameritech Classroom



A Field Trip to Cuyahoga Valley National Park allowed students to examine various plant species in their natural habitat.

with a variety of presentations in which they shared their knowledge and concerns about the environment and human encroachment. Dioramas, skits, multimedia presentations were all utilized by students in these final attempts to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter. Technology assisted the teacher in the preparation of this unit and the students in the construction of the final project.

Norton Teachers Utilize Bus Trip to Maximize Learning

Students traveling from Norton Intermediate and Grill Elementary schools did not waste travel time as they commuted to and from the Ameritech Classroom. Alpha Smarts provided the students with a tool to do various reflections and assignments. Windy Lewis provided her students with a focus on the essential question, "Why do we want to know about the weather?" Her students were involved in many demonstrations and hands-on activities

to illustrate various concepts regarding weather elements. Weather instruments were constructed and checked daily for information. Students took turns presenting the daily weather map to their peers, utilizing the teacher station and the classroom projection system. Clouds were photographed with digital cameras. Highlights of the unit included field trips to Dr. Schmidlin's weather lab and the KSU biology department greenhouse. At the green-

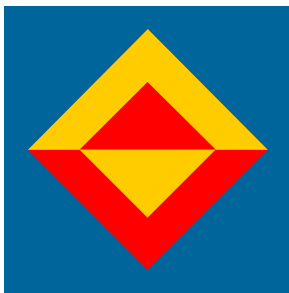
house the students learned about adaptations plants have to particular climates. Students produced multimedia presentations illustrating ideas about the weather and its importance to humans.



Students utilize bus ride to get school work done!

Grill Elementary Provides Last Norton Class

Billie Vaughn and her students from grades one to three studied the idea of patterns in literature, poetry, math, nature, art, and even fabric design. Their adventure at KSU included a trip to the Fashion design school where they took turns using the AutoCAD program to design their



Students became aware of how patterns affected their daily lives.

own patterns for fabrics. Many hands-on lessons with manipulatives helped the students to understand the variety of patterns and their significance. Other field trips associated with this unit included a trip to the Campus Greenhouse where flower bed patterns were examined and the Liquid Crystal Insti-

tute where patterns in crystals were illustrated by hands-on activities. Upon return to the classroom students found pictures of flowers online and used them to construct a pattern to be printed and later prepared as a lei. A final project of planning a quilt to be hung in the classroom was produced with the assistance of Joyce Kruskinski the technology coordinator for the Norton schools. Two quilts were made and one currently hangs in the Ameritech classroom.